

Appendix C

COMMENTS ON DI'S UNDERSTANDING OF A&E
RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE RESEARCH BRANCH

1. In weighing the evidence for and against the abolition of the internal research program, the Inspector General has not understood a number of matters. The primary focus of A&E research is on determining the applicability and meaning, for Agency purposes, of assessment devices and procedures used.

"Research and Validation is literally the life blood of a functioning, effective assessment and evaluation program. The systematic follow-up and continuous evaluation of the A&E processes insures a really professional service. Although this has long been recognized, the planning and implementation of this Branch is far behind schedule. Immediate results cannot and should not be expected, but long term and long range planning is essential. A few limited research projects have now been undertaken, but much remains relative to planning. It should be pointed out that every independent survey of the A/E function has pointed out the deficiencies in this area and it can be anticipated that any future survey would continue to serve (sic) the Agency for failure to provide this service."

This is a quotation from a paper prepared for the Deputy Director of Training (Special) in July 1952 during the last episode of difficulty with A&E. It is signed by [redacted] is Acting Chief, Assessment and Evaluation Staff; [redacted] Chief, Research Branch; [redacted] Chief, [redacted]; and [redacted]

[redacted] Chief, Training Evaluation Branch. This statement recognizes the importance of determining which assessment procedures are contributing to correct predictions and which are not. It recognizes that a program should be based on more than opinion and faith. The kind of research that is meant can be done only with data on Agency employees. The formulation of problems of this type, designing of the research, and the interpretation of results can be done adequately only by personnel knowledgeable of both the assessment process and the Agency situation. The report is critical of the A&E Staff for not having more knowledge of DO/P problems. It is difficult enough for in-service research workers to gain this knowledge. Use of contract employees would only aggravate the problem.

2. The report ignores the accomplishments of the internal research program. The development of the Foreign Language Aptitude Test Battery, which is conceded by most to have been very valuable to the Agency, the accumulation of norms and validity data which has

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strengthened the assessment process, the development of tests for the DQ/P (See Attachment 1). These efforts would have been more costly by contract and would have entailed security risks.

3. It is hard to see how contract research can be justified on the basis of economy. Contracting of research would duplicate facilities that would be provided by the computer. Data processing, storage, and retrieval for individual interpretation and for research are most efficiently performed as integrated functions. They are integrated now, and it was anticipated they would continue to be integrated under different machine treatment. Separation of these functions would prevent this efficient integration. In fact, it is most unlikely that computer treatment of A&S data could be justified without an internal research program making use of the data. The report completely overlooks the point that regardless of which system is used, there will be at least three persons needed to handle the data processing function. Considering that the recommendation that the internal research program be replaced by research under external contract amounts to the abolition of an entire branch, it would seem that the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external research would be discussed with the Chief of the Branch concerned. This was not done. It is hard to avoid the inference, therefore, that the survey was begun with the idea that external research was more efficient than internal research, as it may well be elsewhere in the Agency, and that no real effort was made to determine the validity of this point of view in this particular situation.

4. The Inspector General's report makes a great deal of the point that operational problems do not lend themselves to conventional research methods. He misunderstands; research methodology is not conventional or unconventional, it is the problems to which research is applied that may be classified from this point of view. Whether the problem be conventional or unconventional, proper experimental design, adequate number of cases are necessary for the firm establishment of conclusions. Effort should be bent, therefore, to getting data which conform to the requirements of research whenever possible. A scientist would consider it a betrayal of ethics were he to pretend it were otherwise. This is not to say that problems of an unconventional sort where good experimental design cannot be developed, and where adequate numbers of cases cannot be obtained, should not be approached on a judgmental, exploratory, and service basis. The limitations of the conclusions that can be clearly drawn must, however, be kept in mind. The A&S Staff works hard to collect the right kind of data when it can. The development of the Work Attitudes Inventory is a clear example of this effort and refutes the IG's statement that "... operational support activities ... by their very nature ... do not lend themselves to ... the development of test measures" (p. 27, para. 18). Many do not, but the statement is too sweeping.

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5. Most of the research projects that have been undertaken by the A&E Staff have not permitted the use of masses of data, as the IO implies. This has not prevented ARS from tackling a wide variety of problems using small numbers of cases. Again, it must be pointed out that the A&E Staff, with rare exception, has not been requested to work on clandestine problems, research or service wise. This has invited us to submit problems for them to help on, but the bringing of a problem and requesting our assistance has seldom been done.

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